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Approved For Release 2004/07/07 : CIA-RDP75-00149R000500110003-5

LOUISVILLE, KY.
COURIER-JOURNAL

M - 223,511
S - 327,601

AUG 18 1965

LBJ's Remarkable Search For Talent

THAT THERE IS an extra bonus to the public in having a President who likes every facet of his job has long been manifest in the case of Lyndon B. Johnson, a self-styled "career man in government." But even those who know him best must be surprised by the passion for detail exhibited by LBJ, according to John W. Macy, Jr., his talent scout, in searching for able men and women to fill top-level government positions.

Mr. Macy, another "career man in government" who has held top personnel jobs under three Presidents and is now chairman of the Civil Service Commission, does the spade work. With the help of a computer and "a network of contacts," he draws on punch-card records of over 20,000 prospective nominees and coast-to-coast sources in industry, labor, and private organizations to keep his talent file ever-ready, sends daily memos to the President, usually offering half a dozen names or more for each vacancy.

That's where the industrious Texan

takes over. According to Mr. Macy, he reviews the memos in his night reading, acts on them with remarkable speed, sometimes rejects a whole batch, asks for more suggestions, seeks advice from Cabinet officers and close friends, frequently calls for personal interviews and full FBI reports.

He throws out "politics as usual" as a yardstick, and naturally comes up with some surprising appointments, as when, from reading a book detailing the role of Vice Admiral William F. Raborn in developing the Navy's Polaris missile system, he called Raborn out of retirement to head the Central Intelligence Agency.

Behind all this, of course, is the realization of a "career man in government" that Presidential appointees "reflect the caliber of the administration." By mid-July President Johnson had named some 320 men and women to top-salaried jobs—and there is general agreement that the caliber has been, on the whole, top-level. Including, naturally, Mr. Macy himself.